THE LITERACY MATERIALS

BULLETIN

20

Fall 1999

MINISTRY OF ADVANCED EDUCATION, TRAINING AND TECHNOLOGY
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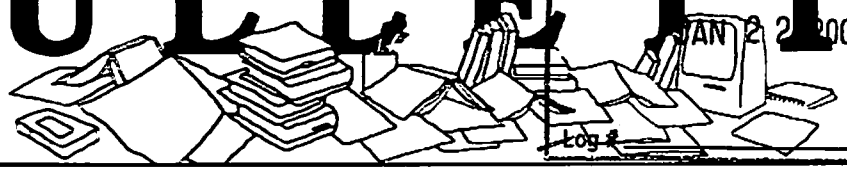

• instructors • tutors • learners • administrators • coordinators • resource centres • learning centres •

Welcome to the 20th edition of the *Literacy Materials Bulletin.* Our thanks to the National Literacy Secretariat: Human Resources Development Canada and the BC Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology for ten years of funding and support.

In the *Literacy Materials Bulletin* committee, we have been struggling with some difficult questions about materials. One is the question of historical material. If material tries to describe the past and uses words that were recorded then or describes attitudes that were commonly held then, there may be problems. Women may be described as weak or helpmates rather than full, able participants in their own lives. First Nations people may be explained in ways that they would never use about themselves. What does an instructor do with that in the teaching situation?

Is it good enough to say, "That's what people thought then (or that's what white people or men thought then), but we don't accept that today"? How do you protect those in the classroom who are still struggling against those attitudes in their world today? Do you decide not to use these materials at all? If so, what materials do you use to study history?

If you are considering these questions, we suggest that you discuss the issues with your students and colleagues. If you would like to suggest a guideline to us at the *Bulletin,* please contact the editor; we'd love to get some feedback to help us in our on-going conversation.

In this issue, we are promoting the video *Forgotten Warriors* which describes the experience of First Nations Veterans in Canada. This video will require you to work with some of the issues history has posed. Other materials in this *Bulletin* will also challenge, and we hope you find the selection useful.

With this issue, the ***Bulletin*** says good-bye to Lorrie Lane and Jan Sawyer. They have been wonderful to work with. Our thanks to you. We have two new members to welcome, Ruth Chambers and Lil McPhail. We are looking forward to working with their new insights and energy. Finally, thanks to proof-reader, Judith Jeffery and desk-topper, Joanna Lord. Without you - no *Bulletin.*

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Title:	***Gwa'Sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Stories Volume 1***
Authors:	The children and literacy students of Gwa'Sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nation
Publisher:	Ministry of Adult Education, Training and Technology, 1997
Available:	Gwa'Sala-'Nakwaxda'xw First Nation Adult Education Centre Box 5120, Port Hardy, BC V0N 2P0 phone (250) 949-8341 fax (250) 949-2608
ISBN:	1-55056-445-5
Price:	$20.00 & shipping
Reviewer:	Catherine Reynolds

Gwa'Sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Stories

This delightful book is the product of a collaboration between the school children and an elders' literacy program at Tsulquate, the population centre of the Gwa'Sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nation located near Port Hardy on the north end of Vancouver Island. The contents range from poetry to historical document to personal anecdote to first generation stories. The many drawings and photographs, of both historical and contemporary people, places, and events are a beautiful complement to the written text.

In reviewing this book, I must confess my own excitement at its publication and my pleasure every time I open it and see familiar faces. I grew up in Port Hardy and know many of the people featured in this book. It is absolutely thrilling for me to see, in print, some of the stories I have been told by different individuals. The beauty of their voices is strong in my head as I read. Even more clearly, I can hear their laughter.

Students have responded positively to the illustration and written content. One Heiltsuk student said, "Their culture is a lot like ours. We should do a book like this." A literacy student in Duncan said, "I like the stories. I also like that elders are still around telling stories to future generations. I also like some students writing their own poems." A Cowichan student said that it is interesting to learn about other First Nations people's art and traditional dress and to compare them to his own.

The book is valuable to literacy programs for a number of reasons. The history it contains cannot fail to expand on non-Aboriginal readers' understanding of the history and vibrancy of an important, contemporary culture. In addition to documenting important stories in an accessible format, it inspires other students. When students hold this product in their hands and know that others like them created it, they know what they are capable of.

As the book is comprised of a series of different types of writing, the reading level varies from fundamental to independent, so there is something for everyone here. Because the subject matter ranges from tribal to provincial history, and from creative to personal writing, *Gwa'Sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Stories* has a place in nearly every aspect of a curriculum.

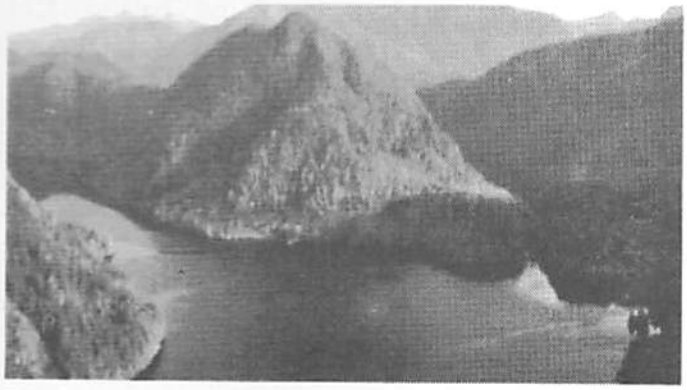
This lovely book tells a people's own story in their own words and I very much look forward to the second volume in what I hope becomes an extensive series.

From *Gwa'Sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Stories Volume 1*. Reproduced by permission of Province of British Columbia, Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology. This page is reduced to 90% of original size.

Sample Page

Going to Toksi

I remember one time that my Dad took us to *Toksi*, the place where it is very narrow in Smith Inlet. The tide is strong when it is running. This is the place where you can heal people. It is also the way you go to get to Tseʔla, to the village where we used to do our fish. The fish there were sockeye and pinks, no dog salmon. The sockeye were very big.



Wyclese Lagoon in the foreground. Long Lake in the background, right-hand.

You have to take your boat through the narrows to get to Tseʔla. It is very dangerous, because the current is so strong. Dad said he was going to take Jimmy in the rowboat through the narrows, while Mom and I walked along the shore to Tseʔla. He said this would make Jimmy better. It was hard for Jimmy to walk, because he limped.

So Mom and I walked along the shore till we got to the village, and Dad rowed Jimmy in the rowboat. I remember there were always logs in the narrows. The current always brought lots of logs. When he came through the narrows he had to push the logs out of the way. I remember Dad told us you couldn't cut the logs out of the way. It was bad luck to cut them.

Well, after Dad and Jimmy came through the narrows, sure enough Jimmy was better. He still limped, but it wasn't as bad as before. Then we went to Tseʔla and we smoked our fish and made *kʼawas* and *xʼubəkʷ*.

Sarah Hunt (*Malidʼəs*)

Tseʔla is the Gwa'Sala name for Long Lake, in Smith Inlet. The water of the lake runs along a narrow, fast running river into Wyclese Lagoon, and from there through another narrow passage into Smith Inlet. In June and July sockeye swim from the Inlet through Wyclese Lagoon into Long Lake, where they spawn. Toksi is one of the Gwa'Sala reserves. It is located next to the river from Long Lake into Wyclese Lagoon. "Toksi" means narrow place. "Kʼawas" is dried sockeye. "xʼubəkʷ" is barbecued sockeye.

Sarah's Dad was Edward Walkus and her mother was Sally Walkus (Sally George before she married her father). They had twenty-two children. The following are still alive in '96: Sarah, Violet, Simon, David, Jimmy, Marion.

Title:	*Good Stuff*
Editor and Illustrator:	Jeanette Paul
Publisher:	South Shore Adult Education Services, 1997
Available:	Adult and Career Education Services Riverside School Board, 880 Hudson Street, Suite E-100, Greenfield Park, QC J4V 1H1 phone (450) 676-1843 fax (450) 676-1350
ISBN:	0-9682090-0-9
Price:	$12.00 & GST & shipping
Reviewer:	Jan Weiten

Good Stuff

"It's like a menu!" "There's so much to choose from." "I could do this."

These are some student responses to *Good Stuff*.

Good Stuff is a collection of 128 stories, dialogues, short articles and poems written by 62 different contributors. The writings range in tone from wistfully sad to factual to slapstick funny. The entries are short. The longest piece of writing is only several pages long. The writing in this book is plain and strong. The poetry has clear images with meanings that everyone can quickly grasp. Small groups had a lot of fun with the book. One poem, "My Hero," made everyone laugh out loud.

Students like the wide variety of topics, the humour in many of the selections, and the shortness of the individual entries. The book is appropriate to use with all reading levels. Selections can be read aloud to beginner readers.

Other readers will be able to handle the reading on their own. Even the most advanced readers will enjoy the book. The book's content is Canadian.

Individual articles in the book can be used as writing catalysts. Many of the entries can be used to inspire learners to write their own poetry, stories and articles, especially since the writing in the book is at a level most learners can achieve. The book can also be used to introduce poetry or short fiction to the class. Another way that the book can be used is that each person in the group picks one of the selections in the book, reads it out loud to the class, and talks or writes about what the selection means to them and why they chose it.

Good Stuff has selections that are sometimes entertaining, sometimes thoughtful, and often both. It is a success because it contains writing that people really want to read.

From *Good Stuff* edited by Jeanette Paul. Reproduced by permission of South Shore Adult Education Services.

Sample Page

A HOT TALK

by Andrea Hartford

(Story)

Living in the mountains can be wonderful. It can also be strange. The lonely life can cause normal people to become odd.

That's what happened to Dale. Dale lived in a small shack. It was a hundred feet up the side of a mountain. Ten miles from town.

He lived off the land as much as possible. He picked berries and dug roots. And he generally tried anything that looked good to eat. Summers were grand. Winters were cold and lonely.

One cold winter night Dale was loading his wood stove. It was an airtight wood stove. Now an air-tight looks like a big tin can with a popup lid. And about as pretty.

Dale loaded his stove with so much wood that the outside glowed. Like the fires of Hell.

Title:	***Reaching the Peak: A Tutor's Handbook for Using the Community Newspaper***
Authors:	Sandra Donnelly and Linda Rosen
Publisher:	Ministry of Adult Education, Training and Technology, 1998
Available:	Malaspina University-College, 3960 Selkirk Avenue Powell River, BC V8A 3C6 phone (604) 485-2878 fax (604) 485-2868
Price:	$15.00
Reviewer:	Joyce Cameron

Reaching the Peak:
A Tutor's Handbook for Using the Community Newspaper

This handbook is designed for tutors who are working with students for the first time. It will help tutors to remember and apply what they learned in their training courses, as well as give them some new ideas. The authors intend *Reaching the Peak* to be a flexible starting place.

The handbook uses plain language, large print, lots of white space and attractive boxes and graphics. The writing seems to include students as part of the audience sometimes, but at other times, the writing is directed only to the tutor. But a tremendous advantage of *Reaching the Peak* is that photocopying is allowed, so instructions to the tutor can be removed, and what remains can be used 'as is' with the learner. What a boon for tutors!

The handbook is divided into two main sections. The first, "Strategies and Activities," provides many ideas for teaching reading, writing and critical thinking. The second, "Sample Units and Exercises," presents three articles from the community paper, *The Peak*, at three different levels. The upper level uses the articles directly from the newspaper, and the middle and fundamental levels are both rewritten versions of the original articles.

I found that the fundamental level reading passages were too high for beginning readers, but most of the exercises could be used. Perhaps the rewritten articles could be read to students. The exercises make use of the strategies and activities from the first section. Possible vocabulary words and their meanings are listed, and suggestions are made for vocabulary activities.

There were a few things I didn't agree with–for example, I wouldn't tell tutors that rewriting is easy and I wouldn't ask students to copy paragraphs–but these were far outweighed by the many practical ideas the authors presented and carefully explained.

The authors chose to focus on their local community newspaper to help students learn about their community and the opportunities for participating in "the town's rich social life." The strategies and activities can be applied to other local papers and even to other types of reading material.

It is apparent that the handbook was written by experienced and thoughtful instructors. It is no accident that tutors and learners who gave feedback were very enthusiastic about *Reaching the Peak.*

From *Reaching the Peak: A Tutor's Handbook for Using the Community Newspaper* by Sandra Donnelly and Linda Rosen. Reproduced by permission of Province of British Columbia, Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology. This page is reduced to 90% of original size.

Sample Page

ASKING QUESTIONS

Asking yourself questions is a very good and useful strategy to use before you read, while you read, and after you have finished reading. Asking questions can help you better understand and remember ideas and information.

➢ **Before You Read**

Some people refer to this as **previewing** the reading. It is an excellent technique because it helps to focus on what it is you are about to read. Study the title and any headings or pictures and ask yourself questions such as:

- What is this article or story about?
- What do I already know about this topic?
- What do I want to find out about this topic?

➢ **While You Read**

Stop often and ask yourself questions. Sometimes it helps you to **paraphrase** what you are reading (put it into your own words).

- What is this paragraph or part about?
- What is the writer really saying?
- How do I feel about this writer's opinion?
- Where is this leading?
- Is there a pattern?

➢ **After You Finish Reading**

Ask yourself questions about what you have read.

- What was the subject about?
- What was the main idea of the piece?
- What was interesting to me?
- What was new, what did I learn?
- Do any of the ideas connect with my experiences?
- Do any of the ideas connect with other things I've read?

Title: *Ten Legends Workbook: Ojibwa and Iroquois Legends*
Author: Jim Tole
Publisher: Ningwakwe Clearing House, 1173 2nd Avenue East,
Owen Sound, ON N4K 2J1 phone 1-800-971-2255
or (519) 371-5594 fax (519) 371-5598
email: onlc@bmts.com
ISBN: 1-896832-08-3
Price: $10.00
Reviewer: Debbie Booth-Johnson

Ten Legends Workbook: Ojibwa and Iroquois Legends

This workbook focuses on the culture and legends of the Ojibwa and Iroquois people of northern Ontario. It is produced by the United Native Friendship Center Literacy Program in Owen Sound, Ontario.

Ten Legends Workbook is an excellent workbook for beginning readers. It presents ten of the Ojibwe and Iroquois legends with appropriate follow-up activities. Each story is followed by exactly the same types of activities; specifically there are fill-in-the-blanks, a cloze exercise, a vocabulary exercise, a word search, and a word jumble. This kind of repetition can be reassuring to beginning readers because there is a predictable pattern to what is being asked of them. It might also be viewed as tedious for more advanced readers, so I would always encourage students to choose the exercises which appeal to them most. The answer key for all of these exercises is included in the back of the book.

The legends were well received by all the students who reviewed them. One of the reasons is that they are the kind of stories that can be enjoyed by all ages. One student said, "My daughter would enjoy this. I'm going to read it to my kids." These stories are an appropriate resource to promote family literacy and cultural awareness. Many students wanted to know if there are other similar volumes written by other First Nation's groups across Canada. Indeed, one student suggested that a copy of *Ten Legends* with an application for funding should be sent to every band office in North America. What a valuable collection of information and stories that would be!

This book is exceptionally well presented. The print size, content, art work and general page layout make it very attractive, and it certainly is a welcome addition in our classroom. It would be an valuable resource in a regular literacy classroom, learning center or one-to-one tutoring situation.

From *Ten Legends Workbook: Ojibwa and Iroquois Legends* edited by Jim Tole. Reproduced by permission of Ningwakwe Clearing House. This page is reduced to 95% of original size.

Sample Page

How the Bees Got Their Stingers

There was a time when bees did not have stingers. They were small and had no way of protecting themselves, so all the animals and birds used to steal their honey.

The bear, who was greedy, could never get enough honey. No matter where the bees hung their hives the bears would find them. The birds would suck the honey from the hives. The squirrels and chipmunks found the honey and ate it too. Thee bees always worked hard and looked every where for blossoms to make more honey.

One time, autumn came and most of the flowers had withered and died. The bees did not store enough honey to last the long, cold winter so many of the bees died.

At last spring came, the bees decided to go see Nanabush, the Great Spirit Being. They took Nanabush a gift of honey, in hopes that he could help them against the other animals and birds. Nanabush listened to the bees and told them because they worked hard and were not lazy, he would give them something to defend themselves against the animals and birds.

The bees were each given a stinger. The bees were pleased because now they would be able to protect themselves and their honey. The bees gave thanks to Nanabush by giving him the gift of sacred tobacco.

The bees returned home and they were happy. Soon the animals and birds gave up trying to steal the honey all except the bears. A swarm of bees would attack the greedy bear and send him yelping back into the forest or the river but the bear kept returning.

Soon the bear learned not to be so greedy and the bees were grateful to Nanabush for their stingers.

Title:	***Oakland Readers***
Publisher:	Laubach Literacy of Canada, 1992-1996
Available:	70 Crown Street, Suite 225 Saint John, NB E2L 2X6 phone (506) 634-1980 fax (506) 634-0944
Price:	Each series (4 books) $25.95
Reviewer:	Jan Weiten

Oakland Readers

There are four different series of *Oakland Readers*, each made up of four books. The four books within each series have different parts of life stories from the same literacy students written at four reading levels. For example, the fourth series has different parts of Levester Pierson's story in all four of the books written at the different reading levels. This structure is designed to make the stories accessible to beginning readers and to encourage them to read at a higher level, once they get interested in a particular person's life story.

The stories are quite brief. Each one is no longer than three pages. Each story is accompanied with a black-and-white photograph, usually of the story-teller or the story-teller with family members. The stories are about the students' life experiences. These often include difficulties that they had in learning as children, workplace experiences, roadblocks that they have encountered because of their limited reading and writing skills, successes that they have achieved as adult learners, and plans that they have for their futures. The stories are heartwarming, sad, humorous and always adult in tone and content.

My students felt that these stories reflected their own lives. One student commented, "It's like me. I'm smart, but I can't read and write very good." Another said that she felt the books were inspiring: "Perseverance will get me there too." Another commented that "It was nice to read stories about people all over the world."

The books do not have a Canadian feel to them. Place names, some of the language, and certainly, some of the dialect, which has not been edited out, are obviously from the United States. Though some students did notice that the stories were from the United States, it did not take away from their appreciation or understanding.

I would use these books as a non-threatening way of getting learners talking and writing about their own life experiences. They could even be used as models for encouraging a class to create its own book. With a more advanced class, I would have the students respond to a particular photograph, with or without the accompanying text, in a response log or journal.

I DIDN'T HAVE THE BOOKWORK

Levester Pierson

intelligence
education
paperwork

People like me. I do good work on jobs. All my jobs they've wanted to promote me. Let me run the whole place. You can count on me. I go to work. I don't miss no days. I go to work. I work when I'm there. I don't get messed up with people on the job. I just go and do my job. You advance like that. I always advance. Every job I've had. They always want to promote me. But I didn't have the bookwork. The intelligence, common sense, I had all that.

That makes me angry. My education. I probably be somewhere in an office. Every time they'd want to promote me I would quit. Because of my education. People would tell me, "Fake it, fake it. Fake like you can do this. Get other people to do it."

Once I was forced into a higher job. I got scared. I couldn't deal with it. People told me to get someone else to do the work for me. "You're in charge. You don't have to do the paperwork. Get someone to do the paperwork for you."

I feel that wasn't fair. I feel I should have been able to do it myself. So I'd quit. I'd quit and start drinking again.

From *I Didn't Have the Bookwork*, Oakland Readers, Fourth Series, Level Three. Reproduced by permission of Laubach Literacy of Canada. This material is reduced to 80% of its original size.

Sample Page

Title:	***Her Story: Women from Canada's Past*** and ***Her Story II***
Author:	Susan E. Merritt
Publisher:	Vanwell Publishing Ltd., 1993 and 1995
Available:	Your local bookstore or Vanwell Publishing, Box 2131 St. Catherines, ON L2R 7S2 phone 1-800-661-6136 or (905) 937-1760 fax (905) 937-1760
ISBN:	*Her Story* 1-55125-000-4 *Her Story II* 1-55125-022-5
Price:	$14.95
Reviewer:	Nancy Ross

Her Story: Women from Canada's Past

Her Story and *Her Story II* are collections of stories about Canadian women. Each selection is introduced with a lively anecdote and continues by discussing the woman's life and achievements. The layout is attractive and every selection is accompanied by several pictures. Throughout each book, there are also intriguing photos of other Canadian women. For example, some pages show Canadian women working hard - in the fields, in the bush, on the farm - accompanied by the quote, "Too delicate to vote."

I like the stories a great deal because they are so informative, interesting and culturally inclusive. They are about all kinds of women, First Nations and immigrant, who experienced significant historical events. Each selection provides thorough explanations so that readers can understand what the events meant for that woman at that time.

Generally, women students were more interested and appreciative of the books than were the men. Some students were interested in reading *Her Story* on their own. They liked choosing selections about women they found the most interesting. When a story was read in class, it was well received, inspiring lively discussion.

Students appreciated learning about the Canadian past. For example, one selection tells the story of the last Beothuk, a now-extinct tribe from Newfoundland. Another selection tells of Emily Carr who wrote and painted in BC. One student commented, "The stories were interesting, exciting and sad." Another commented that she was becoming more familiar with Canadian history through the book, and that it had many lessons for her to learn. I would recommend both *Her Story* and *Her Story II* for classroom and individual use.

From *Her Story: Women from Canada's Past* by Susan E. Merritt. Reproduced by permission of Vanwell Publishing Ltd.

Sample Page

CHAPTER 5

LEADER AND LOYAL ALLY

MOLLY BRANT

(1736 -1796)

You have great influence with your people, Miss Molly. Your word is law to them.

—Colonel John Butler

Dark eyes blazing with anger, Molly shook the other woman by the shoulders and demanded, "Where is your husband?"

Herkimer's wife gazed in terror at Molly Brant, then dropped her eyes. She tried to break away, but Molly tightened her grip.

"Where is your husband? Tell me where Herkimer has gone and why!" If she discovered the location of Nicholas Herkimer's rebel army, Molly could send a Mohawk runner to warn her brother and the others.

Molly paused and added in a low voice full of menace "Remember, I am a Clan Mother—do not even think of telling me a lie!"

Shaking with fear, Herkimer's wife stammered out all that she knew.

EARLY LIFE

Of the many First Nations in North America, the Iroquois or Six Nations are among the most famous. Molly Brant was born in 1736 into the Mohawk nation—one of the leading nations belonging to the Iroquois. Molly's family was an important one–her grandfather had been a *sachem* or peace chief who had traveled to England and visited the King.

Molly grew up in the Mohawk Valley in what is today New York State. The Mohawk people had a great deal of power because they controlled the rich Mohawk Valley which was an important gateway into the centre of North America.

The Mohawks in the Mohawk Valley had grown used to European settlers, and Molly attended a European style school for young ladies. As a result, she grew up able to move with grace and skill in both the Iroquois world and the European world of the new settlers.

The two worlds were very different in their treatment of women.

Title:	***Rainforests***
Author:	Rowena Akinyemi
Publisher:	Oxford University Press, 1995
Available:	Your local bookstore
ISBN:	0-19-422803-7
Price:	$10.50
Reviewer:	Arlee Schmidt

Rainforests

This is a book about the rainforest and how it is disappearing. It tells about different animals and plants and why the rainforest is important to the world. Many students liked the book.

"The author of this book had an easy way to explain that people don't understand what's going on in the rainforest." "The words were easy to read and to understand because the author repeated some of the words more than once and gave us questions to be answered and a glossary at the back. In addition, colourful pictures helped the book be more interesting to read."

"I like this book a lot because it makes you think about what people are doing to the rainforest. In the 1950s the rainforests covered 15% of the Earth and now, forty years later, people have destroyed half of this. But will there be any rainforests in the year 2020 for us and our children? The rainforests are home to 50 million people. Scientists think there are millions of species of animals, plants and insects which live there."

"There are so many different kinds of things there, like the rafflesia flower. It is the largest flower in the world. It catches insects and eats them. The katydid, an insect, looks like a leaf. This is very good to protect it from the insect-eating birds in the trees around it."

The book explains that the destruction of the rainforests is happening because of money. The poor countries need to make money. The rich countries have it to spend.

In the classroom, our teacher let each student read out loud and ask questions when we didn't understand. We also did the questions in the back of the book. This was a good way to get more out of it. The book leaves you with questions in the back of your mind for more research.

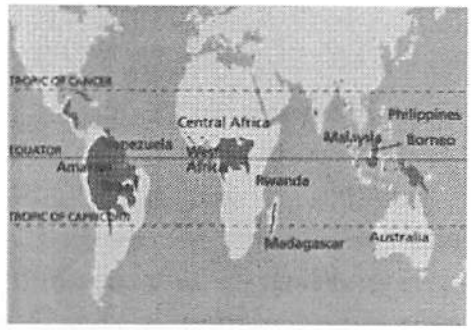
See the following review for three more titles in this series.

From *Rainforests* by Rowena Akinyemi. Reproduced by permission of Oxford University Press.

Sample Page

2 Rainforests of the world

The weather in a rainforest is hot all the year round – usually between 20 degrees Celsius and 28 degrees Celsius every day. The weather is always wet, too; most rainforests have more than 200 mm of rain in a month. In Belem, in Brazil, it rains on about 243 days each year. And the rain is heavy! On a rainy day in a rainforest 20 mm of rain can fall. (On a rainy day in London, about 5 mm of rain falls.)



Rainforests today

The Amazon rainforest is about a hundred million years old, and has more species of animals and plants than any other place on Earth. People have now cut down much of this rainforest to plant coffee and sugar. *Angel Falls* in Venezuela, the highest waterfall in the world (979 metres), is in one part of this Latin American forest.

There are different kinds of rainforest. Some are high in the mountains and others are near the sea. Mangrove swamps grow by the sea, often at the mouths of great rivers.

Angel Falls, Venezuela

Title:	***Under the Ground*** by Rosemary Border
	Seasons and Celebrations by Jackie Maguire
	Animals in Danger by Joe Potter and Andy Hopkins
Publisher:	Oxford University Press, 1996 and 1997
Available:	Your local bookstore
ISBN:	***Under the Ground*** 0-19-422807-X
	Seasons and Celebrations 0-19-422848-7
	Animals in Danger 0-19422805-3
Price:	$8.95 to $10.50 each
Reviewer:	Evelyn Battell

Under the Ground, Seasons and Celebrations, Animals in Danger

There are nine titles in the Fact Files series. Each book is 19 pages long with many colourful photos and drawings and two pages of questions which include comprehension and inferential questions, true or false, sequencing, joining or completing sentences, and research or writing work. The levels are 1 (400 headwords), 2 (700 headwords) and 3 (1000 headwords). (Headwords are the core vocabulary words used in that book.)

Aside from *Rainforests*, Level 2 includes at least two other books of interest. *Under the Ground* includes sections on caves, mining, subways, tunnels, and underground cities. Did you know Tokyo has four kilometres of underground streets with shops and restaurants? The section on caves is the most extensive, including information on plants and animals that live in caves and how caves are formed.

Another book in Level 2 is *Seasons and Celebrations*. This book covers Christian and pagan festivals in Britain, USA, and Canada. At a quick read it seems limited until one remembers the source of the festivals it proposes to discuss. An interesting activity would be to compare other festivals celebrated by Canadians from other traditions such as Ramadan, Hanukkah, and the winter dance season of many First Nations. These traditions do not come from the same roots which may lead to interesting comparisons.

A book of interest from Level 1 is *Animals in Danger*. This is a popular topic with my students and this book has interesting material on the topic. There are descriptions of birds, mammals, fish, etc. that are in danger–some familiar like the rhino and whales, some less familiar such as the tapir and the kakapo. These chapters are only half the book. The other chapters contain descriptions of what the dangers are to animals, what countries can do, what some individuals are doing, and the role of zoos. There is lots of interesting material to learn and debate in this small volume.

Title:	***Forgotten Warriors: The Story of Canada's Aboriginal War Veterans***
Distributor:	National Film Board of Canada, 1996
Available:	Sales and Customer Services, D-10 PO Box 6100, Station Centre-Ville Montreal, QC H3C 3H5 phone 1-800-267-7710 fax (514) 283-7564
Price:	$39.95
Reviewer:	Evelyn Battell

Forgotten Warriors:
The Story of Canada's Aboriginal War Veterans

This 51-minute video opens with evocative dramatizations of young people leaving their homes in the bush, trekking to a railway station, and going to join the armed forces. Old photos showing proud Aboriginal men and women in uniform are accompanied by voice-overs telling of personal feelings and reasons for joining up. "We were going to save our land." "It was all about a maintaining a connection with the land." We learn that in spite of their service, Aboriginal veterans, in fact, often lost their land when they returned to Canada.

This video is a compelling view of war as experienced by these vets and a powerful telling of one of the pieces of Canada's racist past. For both these reasons, it should be used with careful planning.

In both field-testing situations, the video was used with all Aboriginal students. We asked them how to help non-Aboriginal students cope with the content. One student said that non-Aboriginals need to be prepared to see what "their" people did. When asked if the video should be shown to non-Aboriginal groups, one student replied, "Everybody went to war; everybody should see the video."

Another suggestion is to warn non-Aboriginal viewers that they will have to be sensitive about asking questions since Aboriginal viewers will be feeling very vulnerable. The instructor may want to do some other reading on the topic in preparation for the video. One resource, not at a fundmental reading level, is *Native Soldiers, Foreign Battlefields* (see page 23). Some may find the video slow, but to others it will feel as familiar as listening to elders talk–a different communication style.

The video tells how the disenfranchisement of vets, combined with the horror of their memories, broke the spirit of some of them and led to alcohol abuse. In our class, this led to conversation about Vietnam vets coming back addicted to hard drugs.

Toward the end we see attempts by modern First Nations and the Canadian government to honour Aboriginal vets and acknowledge the wrongs done to them. Finally, the video shows a sacred circle conducted by Aboriginal vets on Normandy Beach. The circle allowed them to begin personal healing. One student commented on a man who was "still joking" at the end of the video which reminded him how strong a spirit his people have.

Title:	***"something to think about, please think about this": Report on a National Study of Access to Adult Basic Education Programs and Services in Canada***
Author:	Susan Hoddinott
Publisher:	Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, 1998
Available:	National Literacy Secretariat (see back cover)
ISBN:	0-9684367-0-6
Price:	Free
Reviewer:	Joyce Cameron

"something to think about, please think about this"

This ambitious undertaking is a report on research into government policies on access to literacy and the practical experience of literacy access in four sample sites across the country. The report is dense with ideas, an excellent model of careful research, and is so unusually respectful of both students and literacy teachers that it makes welcome reading. The academic style is offset by the fact that the author does not mince words. She writes: "When it is considered that students and their families are required to make extraordinary sacrifices to attend programs which may simply abandon them, it must be acknowledged that the ramifications of [enrolment-based funding] are nothing less than tragic" (191).

The writing is excellent, but requires careful reading. The chapters are organized to make previewing easy, with introductions, conclusions and clear headings. Some literacy instructors strongly objected to the use of "illiteracy" in the first chapter. This was not an obstacle for others, including me, as the material was not intended for students, and overall, the research and report were exceptionally respectful of students.

One instructor said that she would like to see the first chapter, which "explore[s] the issue of adult illiteracy in Canada in the current period" given to literacy tutors to read (16). Their reading could be followed with a discussion of the important issues presented such as why seeing literacy primarily as a personal rather than social responsibility has hindered progress at policy, programme and individual levels.

I would recommend this report for literacy workers who are interested in conducting their own research. Chapter II in particular provides good examples of the conscientious attention to detail required to conduct sound research and the creativity needed to gather valid data from students and teachers. I was particularly impressed by the effort made to give students a real understanding of the project, to make their participation personally worthwhile, and to value their contribution.

Also I would recommend the report because the ground the author covers while investigating accessibility could be used as a starting place for examining our own programmes and lobbying for improvements.

I do <u>not</u> recommend the report for anyone looking for a light read. This report deserves close reading.

From *something to think about: please think about this* by Susan Hoddinott. Reproduced by permission of National Literacy Secretariat: Human Resources Development Canada.

Sample Page

Adult Illiteracy in Canada

Towards an Understanding of the Issue

Chapter Summary

This chapter establishes the theoretical framework for the presentation and analysis of the findings from the National Study of Access to Adult Basic Education Programs and Services in Canada. It discusses the official (and popularly accepted) definitions and measures of literacy which currently prevail in this country and assesses the relationship between these definitions and measures, and educational attainment data. It also examines critically the ways in which our understanding of adult illiteracy (as an individual and social issue) has been shaped by literacy campaigning activities over the past decade and, in particular, by media involvement in the campaign. The central argument of the chapter is that the solutions which we adopt to address a problem are a reflection of what we understand to be the nature of the problem; only by critically examining current perceptions of the nature of adult illiteracy can we assess existing public strategies to address the issue and begin to envision alternatives.

Introduction

It is now a decade since literacy was declared a national priority in the Parliament of Canada (Speech from the Throne, October 1, 1986). There can be little doubt that, in the intervening period, the average Canadian has become more aware of the issue of adult illiteracy than perhaps at any other time in this country's history. Responding to a national opinion survey conducted in 1990, International Literacy Year, 84 percent of those polled identified illiteracy as a "very" serious or "somewhat" serious problem (ABC Canada, undated:3-4). Three major, highly publicized nationwide surveys of adult literacy performance have been conducted since the 1986 declaration, theoretically adding a depth of understanding to popular perceptions of illiteracy (Southam, Inc., 1987; Statistics Canada, 1991; Statistics Canada, Human Resources Development Canada, and National Literacy Secretariat, 1996).

This chapter examines current perceptions of illiteracy and, in particular, the ways in which our understanding of illiteracy has been shaped over the past decade—as evidenced in the manner in which it is presented in the public arena (media, educators, policy makers) and in the policy and programming trends which have been developed in response to new awareness about the issue. The solutions which we adopt to deal with a problem are a direct expression of how we define that problem. For this reason, as a first step in assessing

Title:	***Weaving It Together***
Author:	Milada Broukal
Publisher:	Heinle & Heinle, Thomson Learning
Available:	Nelson Thomson Learning
	1120 Birchmount Road, Scarborough, ON M1K 5G4
	phone 1-800-268-2222 fax (416) 752-9646
ISBN:	(Book 1) 0-8384-4221-8
	(Book 2) 0-8384-3977-2
Price:	$30.95
Reviewer:	Lorrie Lane

Weaving It Together

Weaving It Together is a series of four books that integrate reading and writing skills. Each book consists of a number of theme units which each contain two chapters. A typical chapter includes:

- a picture and pre-reading questions to introduce a story
- vocabulary exercises
- comprehension exercises that include looking for the main idea, looking for details, (and at levels 3 and 4, making inferences and drawing conclusions)
- writing exercises which vary from writing complete sentences to writing essays, as well as practicing mechanical skills
- discussion questions which provide opportunity for small and large group interaction.

In Book 1, the stories are short (from 1/3 to 1/2 page); writing exercises include writing complete sentences and basic paragraphs; grammar exercises focus on capitalization and punctuation rules. As the series progresses, stories become longer and writing expectations become greater. For example, in Book 4, writing exercises include summaries, research, paraphrasing, and various types of essays.

For literacy classes, we recommend Books 1 and 2, mainly. I especially am impressed with the manner in which paragraph writing is introduced. The student answers a number of questions, with complete sentences, on one topic. These sentences are rewritten as a paragraph, and a checklist for proper paragraph form is provided. (The sample page is an example of such an exercise.) I find this structured approach to paragraph writing is successful for the beginning writer.

One instructor commented, "There is a good mix of generic articles and ones that increase our knowledge of the whole world. This is a very important aspect of the book. The books have wise recommendations for journal writing."

In our program, we select specific exercises, depending upon each student's needs. Students find the story topics are interesting, and their comments about these books have been very positive.

From *Weaving it Together Book 1* by Milada Broukal. Reproduced by permission of Thomson Learning.

Sample Page

WRITING PRACTICE

1. Write sentences.

Answer these questions with complete sentences.

a. What spice do you use the most?

(soy sauce, chili peppers, curry, salt, ginger, etc.)

_____

_____

b. What foods do you put it on?

(beef, fish, noodles, vegetables, etc.)

_____

_____

c. How many times a day do you eat foods with spices?

_____

_____

d. What special taste or smell do you like?

_____

_____

2. Rewrite in paragraph form.

Rewrite the sentences above in the form of a paragraph.

Checklist

_____ Did you indent the first line?

_____ Did you give a title to your sentences?

_____ Did you write the title with a capital letter?

_____ Did you put the title in the center of the top of the paper?

_____ Did you write on every other line?

Title: ***Land of Hope Volumes 1*** and ***2***
Distributor: National Film Board of Canada
Available: Sales and Customer Services, D-10
PO Box 6100, Station Centre-Ville
Montreal, QC H3C 3H5
phone 1-800-267-7710 fax (514) 283-7564
Price: Two volume set for $74.95 or $39.95 each
Reviewer: Nancy Ross

Land of Hope

Each *Land of Hope* video contains dramatic stories about four immigrants to Canada. In Volume 1, these true-to-life dramatizations include:

- Kate Boyle, who fled Ireland's potato famine, became an orphan on the voyage to Canada, and was adopted by a French-Canadian family;
- John Ware, one of the first Black cowboys, overcame many prejudices and became a successful rancher in south-western Alberta;
- John Mah, a Chinese labourer, tried to settle his family in Canada but was confronted with incredible hardships and racism.

My students found the stories compelling and easy to follow. Each story began and ended with either an actor or a present-day character reflecting on that person's life. This added valuable meaning and context. For example, some characters reflected on their life as if they were telling their stories when they were older. However, some stories were told by real people from the present.

For example, Joe Mah's story was told by his granddaughter; John Ware's story was told by a Black immigrant. Both reflected on the lives of the people whose story they were telling. I liked this because it linked past experiences in history with the experiences of people today.

My students liked these stories because they were true. They helped them understand what many people must have experienced in Canada's past. I also believe that watching these videos may increase our students' understandings about what their fellow students, especially immigrants, are experiencing.

I would recommend doing some pre-teaching before showing these videos to help students develop the context. They could be used around Canada Day and could be followed by discussions about racism and cross-cultural tolerance, as well as immigration issues. If introduced as educational materials, I believe they could be very useful for literacy and E.S.L. classrooms.

The Bulletin's Board

Models for Writing: A guide for using personal narratives to teach writing
(ISBN 1-895665-07-8)
This small book is a handbook for working with *In this Country - Personal Stories About Northern BC*, a book very much enjoyed by many classes since 1994. (For a review of *In this Country* see the *Bulletin*, Fall 1995.) Field-testing of *Models for Writing* produced rave reviews. The stories from *In this Country* are paired, and points of interest, discussion questions, and writing ideas for each story and pair of stories are suggested. The writing topics are stimulating and the thoroughness of the book means you could, in a pinch, trust it to lead you without additional preparation! Both books are available free from Bill Graham at College of New Caledonia, Box 5000, Burns Lake, BC V0J 1E0.
Phone (250) 692-1700, fax (250) 692-1700.

Native Soldiers, Foreign Battlefields, 1993, is available from Veterans Affairs Canada, Communications Division, PO Box 5600, Vancouver, BC V6B 5G4. Phone 1-800-663-1931 Fax. (604) 666-6461, ISBN 0-662-19850-6. This booklet tells many individual stories of First Nations men and women who served in the First and Second World Wars and the Korean War. It also provides some interesting statistics, such as one in three able-bodied First Nations men of service age enlisted in the First World War. It is at an intermediate reading level and fairly dry reading but consists of many small sections on individuals that could be used separately. Some of the same people that are profiled in *Forgotten Warriors* also appear in this document.

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Phone 1-800-663-1293 toll free in BC or fax (604) 684-8520.

We would like to hear from you if you have materials to recommend or requests.

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Please send information and questions to:

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Happy Birthday!

Literacy Materials Bulletin is 10 years old!

From Page 18: National Literacy Secretariat: Human Resources Development Canada, 15 Eddy Street Hull, Quebec, K1A 1K5, phone (819) 953-5280, fax (819) 953-8076